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ABSTRACT

This study is an inquiry into the integration of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) into the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), and focuses on the relationship of computers within a variety of British educational establishments in the county of Sussex (England). The aims of the study were: (1) to examine how TESOL teachers are trained and what the position of CALL is in this process; (2) the look at TESOL practice and find out whether or not CALL is integrated to TESOL; and (3) to look at the implementation of CALL within these two settings in order to see its effectiveness as compared with the previous application of CALL in TESOL. (JL)

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"CALL" IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS

A RESEARCH INTO THE PLACE OF "CALL" IN TESOL

BIRSEN TUTUNIS

Computers are very much part of modern life and are increasingly being used by children and adults at home and in the classroom. Their contribution to learning and specifically to language learning is a pertinent subject which demands examination.Computer assisted language learning (CALL) has aroused an ongoing debate among the linguists. Its potential is still under discussion.

As an experienced EFL teacher, a research into the integration of CALL into TESOL was found useful both in the illumination of the 'State of the Art' of CALL in TESOL and in my own professional development.

CALL at present has a considerable subsidiary role in TESOL and it is not yet integrated into the mainstream teaching. I think it is going to sustain this role for quite a long time until,the constraints such as the training of TESOL teachers to explore the potential of computers in language teaching and learning are lifted.

THE STUDY

This study is an inquiry into the integration of CALL into TESOL and focuses on the relationship of computers within a variety of British educational establish - ments in the County of Sussex.

Aims

The aims of the study were twofold:

1. To examine TESOL in teacher training and see how TESOL teachers are trained and what the position of CALL in this process is ; to look at TESOL in practice and find out whether or not CALL is integrated into TESOL, and,

2. To look at the implementation of CALL within these two settings and see its effectiveness as compared with previous application of technology in TESOL.

These two areas of inquiry with their close relationship with one another were believed to illuminate the 'State of the Art' of CALL in TESOL in the County of Sussex.

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Research Strategy and Methods

The research strategy of this study was not to judge, but to illuminate, to bring a fresh understanding to the place of CALL in TESOL at selected British educational establishments. Conducting a piece of 'Qualitative' research by using eclectic methods was therefore deemed as appropriate for this study.

To be in line with the main aims, I concluded two case-studies; one at the educational institutions where TESOL teacher training courses were run, and the other at state secondary and private language schools where TESOL classes were operated.

For the first case-study, one institute of higher education (IHE) and one private language school were chosen as samples. The reasons for selecting them as samples were as follows:

TESOL teacher qualification is given in either degrees or certificates. It was therefore seen as appropriate to look into one degree and one certificate course as a case-study.

- The first fieldwork for teacher training was conducted at an institute of higher education which I called SCH-BO , and was concentrated on the "Diploma in Teaching Studies" course, but classes in B.Ed. (Honours) in TESOL and PGCE-TESOL courses were also observed.

- The second fieldwork for teacher training was concentrated on the "RSA-TEFLA" Certificate course run by a private language school which I named SCH-GI.

Another institute of higher education (SCH-EA) was also chosen not as a sample but as an institution for observation to crosscheck the findings at the sample institutions. It was found proper for crosschecking because this institution ran both degree and certificate courses in TESOL teacher training.

For the second case-study, two private language schools (SCH-EU and SCH-GI), two state secondary schools (SCH-HO and SCH-BM) were chosen as samples. The reasons for selecting them as samples were as follows:

TESOL covers both EFL and ESL, SCH-GI and SCH-EU were private language schools where they ran EFL classes, SCH_HO and SCH-BM on the other hand, were state secondary schools where I was able to conduct a research into the ESL teaching. Two samples were chosen for each case (EFL and ESL) because, one sample of each case was interested in CALL and the other was not.

Again for the second case-study, SCH-FA was chosen not as a sample but as an in stitution for observation to crosscheck the findings at the sample institutions.

The main methods employed for this research were; observation, interviews and document analysis.
Observation as a technique enabled me to gather data about the classroom interaction and the role of computers in this process.

Interviews on the other hand, gave insight into the values, beliefs and attitudes of the people concerned. Collection and analysis of materials such as; school plans and programmes, text books, time tables and syllabi all formed the primary sources of information.

The summary of fieldwork activities and the number of the people involved in the research can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 Summary of Fieldwork Activities

Table 1.3 SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK ACTIVITIES

AREAS OF INQUIRY	DATA GATHERING METHODS	TARGET
Secondary Schools 1. SCH - BM 2. SCH - HO 3. SCH - FA	1. VISITS (6 weeks) 2. INTERVIEWS (15) 3. OBSERVATION (9)	1. ESL TEACHERS (6) 2. SN TEACHERS (3) 3. HEADS OF THE UNITS (3) 4. ESL STUDENTS (10)
Private Language Schools 1. SCH - EU 2. SCH - GI	1. VISITS (7 weeks) 2. INTERVIEWS (24) 3. OBSERVATION (12)	1. DIRECTOR OF STUDIES (2) 2. EFL TEACHERS (8) 3. EFL STUDENTS (18) 4. CALL TEACHERS (2) 5. TECHNICIANS (1)
Teacher Training Institutions 1. SCH - BO 2. SCH - GI 3. SCH - EA	1. VISITS (6 weeks) 2. INTERVIEWS (22) 3. OBSERVATION (20)	1. LECTURERS (10) 2. TRAINEES (10) 3. CALL LECTURERS (2)
Universities 1. UNV - BR 2. UNV - WA 3. UNV - SX	1. VISITS (1 week)	1. ACADEMICS (4) 2. EXPERTS (4)
CONFERENCES (2) SYMPOSIUMS (2)	8 DAYS 4 DAYS	1. SOFTWARE PRODUCERS AND PUBLISHERS (4) 2. CALL TEACHERS (5)

Research Questions

The major research questions of this study were related to four groups of people involved in TESOL and CALL, namely; TESOL teachers, TESOL students, school managers, and, CALL experts and publishers. The main aims of this study lead to certain questions related to the population mentioned above. The major research questions can therefore be stated as follows:

1. What is the 'State of the Art' of CALL in TESOL?

2. Does TESOL teacher training cover CALL? If not, what are the alternative training opportunities supplied to TESOL teachers?

3. Does CALL change the teacher's role if the teacher integrates it into the mainstream teaching?

4. How effective is CALL in language learning?

5. Does CALL change the learner's attitude towards the teacher or to the language?

6. What is CALL's qualitative contribution to language teaching and learning?

7. What are the implementation problems?

8. What is the school manager's attitude towards CALL?

9. What are the teachers', experts' and software publishers' expectations of CALL for the future?

CONCLUSIONS

1. What is the 'State of the Art' of CALL in TESOL?

CALL is gradually spreading to educational establishments and homes. However, it has not taken off as the other educational media such as tape recorders and videos.It provides a wide range of activities (i.e. tutorial, simulations, problem solving, games, tests, database etc.) which enable the learners to be actively involved in English. They can choose materials according to their needs and work on them at their own pace. CALL programs aim to develop communicative competence. However, their success in the achievement of communicative competence is under discussion (Piper, 1986).

The recent literature related to CALL (e.g. Resource Books for the Teacher -CALL, 1989) concentrate more on the pedagogy than the technology itself. However, it is still not sufficient to give TESOL teachers the confidence to integrate CALL into their mainstream teaching. Although such books emphasise the use of computers as a stimulus for group or pair work activities, the teachers

interviewed for this study do not feel competent enough in the manipulation of the machines and in the area of classroom management. Furthermore, they do not find most of the existing software appealing to their students' needs. They state that they need a decent training, firstly in the manipulation of the machines, secondly in the classroom management (with or without teacher, individual, pair or group use), and finally in the production and evaluation of software.

2. TESOL Teacher Training

Although there have been a variety of national initiatives since 1981 that have focused on the provision of hardware, in-service education and the development of educational software for schools, very little has been done for CALL on the national basis. Some centres (i.e. NCCALL, CILT, CTI CML) have been opened to give service to the teachers throughout the UK. But, the teacher training programmes have not been changed. The place of CALL within TESOL teacher training is insignificant. In the teacher training institutions chosen as samples for this study, most of the teacher trainers are not convinced of CALL's benefits as a resource. The very few teacher trainers who have a special interest in CALL state the strong need for special training on CALL and the necessary change in the curricula. The curricula are designed according to the guidelines of the external bodies (i.e. CNAA, RSA, universities) who award the degrees, and there is no demand for CALL in the guidelines. For the full integration of CALL into TESOL teacher training, the curricula need to be changed. CALL needs to be considered as a subject to be studied. The trainees need to be encouraged to integrate CALL into their teaching practice. They are encouraged to make use of the other media such as tape recorders and videos but they are not asked to use CALL programs. Like any other media, pedagogical and technical problems that occur during implementation need to be discussed. In SCH-BO, there are a few introductory sessions to CALL (10 hours within a yearly course) and the trainees are encouraged to use computers for wordprocessing. It is compulsory to hand in at least one of the papers wordprocessed. SCH-GI on the other hand, is not interested in CALL and there are no sessions devoted to CALL within their RSA-TEFLA Certificate course.

3. TESOL Teachers

The practising teachers find it difficult to integrate CALL into their mainstream teaching. Some of the reasons stated in the interviews are as follows:

- They have not had a special training on CALL. At the local level, some support is provided by the LEAs, but they are short in duration and they do not give full support to teachers (ESL) to integrate CALL into their teaching.

- ESL as a unit is not provided with computers. The teachers therefore, have access problems.

- The ESL teachers work under the constraint of time and have to rush from one school to another to give support to the ESL students.

- Much of the software is geared to EFL not to ESL, they are not therefore designed for the personal computers which are available in state schools.

- The students (ESL) are not as dedicated as EFL students and do not use computers in their spare time.

- EFL teachers are not released from their current jobs to attend CALL courses. There is one EFL teacher at each school who takes care of all the issues related to CALL. The other teachers therefore, prefer to use conventional media in their teaching and refer their students to the teacher responsible with CALL.

- EFL teachers also complain about the quality of software. Much of the existing software is seen by them to be in line with behaviouristic stimulus-response type.

- The absence of oral skills in CALL programs is seen by TESOL teachers as one of the major negative factors in the appreciation of CALL.

- However, TESOL teachers who use CALL programs find CALL effective in the improvement of their students' writing skills.

4. TESOL Students

The age group of TESOL students as informants can be stated as the experienced group of learners (age 15-45) who use monitoring strategies which is being aware of their learning process (Brenzin, 1980). The EFL students chosen as informants were intermediate level in English which facilitated the communication.

It is believed (Chomsky 1966, Krashen 1982) that creation of a rich linguistic environment in the second/foreign language classes, causes a low anxiety situation which affects acquisition. Computer's role on the creation of a rich linguistic environment has not been proved. However, it is certain that the learners are involved in the activities presented by the computer in a 'low filter' learning process, in other words they enjoy working with computers. They feel more relaxed, almost like being in a fun fair, playing with the machines and trying to beat them.

The secondary school students interviewed for this study, all stated that it was fun to work with computers. The EFL students also stated that they enjoyed working with computers. Even for the drill type exercises (tutorial), they said they found them more enjoyable compared to similar exercises found in textbooks.

The main difference diagnosed between the ESL and EFL students was their attitudes towards language learning. EFL students were more dedicated. Their main aim was to learn English to achieve better employment in their own countries. ESL students on the other hand, aimed to learn English to be able to integrate into their mainstream classes. They were more relaxed because they had more facilities and time to learn the language since they were living in the

country where the target language was spoken. EFL students spend a lot of money to learn the language and they have to achieve their goals in a shorter time compared to ESL students. They therefore demand more computer assisted language learning, especially in Business English courses. They believe that, they will be asked for computer skills as well in their future working contexts. By using computers, they achieve both computer literacy and practice their English. ESL students do not have a special demand for computer assisted language learning. They do Information Technology as a subject at school and they are exposed to computers as much as the British students are. They use CALL programs if their ESL support teachers encourage them to do so. Both EFL and ESL students, when they use computers in language learning, enjoy the process, but there is no evidence that CALL makes their learning easier.

5. School Managers

Although the school managers interviewed for this study, are convinced of the use of computers in the mainstream teaching, there is no special effort in the sample institutions to employ CALL. In state secondary schools, Information Technology as a subject has been inserted into the curricula but there are no computers devoted to ESL only. Special Needs teachers make use of some CALL programs. In the sample private language schools, the managers have each employed one EFL teacher who is interested in CALL and have given the whole responsibility of the CALL issues to that teacher. They expect these teachers to give service to the other teachers as well. The school managers of both ESL and EFL believe that CALL has a place but they prefer not to be active employers of CALL until these matters are better understood. They have released their teacher to attend the computer literacy courses offered by the LEA and they seem to be content with it.

6. Experts and Software Publishers

The experts met by the researcher (e.g. Higgins, Davies, Piper) are aware of the limitations of this media, however they are optimistic about the future of CALL. They believe that computers are going to be used in language classes as often as the tape recorders. They think computers assist language tutoring, they stimulate reality, they enable the learners to process the language, and they influence the students' learning strategy(i.e. the options in the MENU and the student's choice determines his/her learning strategy).

Publishers (WIDA, LONGMAN) complain about the copyright and the pay off for the investment, but they are determined to continue this business. They believe that computers and the Interactive Video will be used more in our future language classes (IATEFL, SIG Meeting;, 1989).

Thus, briefly the outcomes of this study can be stated as follows:

1. The 'State of the Art' of CALL in TESOL at present does not look very satisfactory, despite the encouraging efforts of some CALL experts and publishers. Its future however, carries some positive hopes provided that the teachers (the real practitioners) are given the necessary support. Most of the teachers interviewed for this study did not have the technical competence and the pedagogical knowledge related to CALL. The cost of hardware and the quality of software also are the deferring factors which cause a delay in the take off of CALL.

2. The place of "CALL" within the TESOL teacher training is insignificant. The alternative training opportunities supplied to practising TESOL teachers are short term in-service training and specially designed half-day or full-day CALL courses. However, there is no follow-up support and the teachers can not spare enough time to discover the potential of computers for their language classes. There is a strong need therefore, for a decent teacher training on CALL if teachers are expected to employ CALL in their mainstream teaching.

3. CALL, when integrated into the mainstream teaching, changes the teacher's role. The teacher becomes the 'pedagogue' not the 'magister' (Higgins, 1988). In other words, the teacher becomes the consultant instead of the traditional evaluator. The Business English classes and the Special Needs ESL support classes observed for this study, proved the above mentioned role of the teacher.

4. CALL's effectiveness in language learning has not yet been proved. However, its effectiveness in the enhancement of the learners' writing skills is undeniable.

5. The relationships of computers to learning in general, and to language learning specifically has not yet been clarified. However, it is known for sure that students are better motivated and enjoy the learning process if they use computers.

6. CALL's qualitative contribution to language teaching and learning is seen by the practitioners in the enhancement of writing skills. The computer in our language classes is not a methodological innovation although it requires special pedagogical knowledge. It does not change the whole system of language teaching as it occurred in the "Communicative Approach". It is a useful tool in our classes along with other media used to create a rich linguistic environment. If the schools are computerised and the teachers are offered computer facilities, there is no harm in employing computers. They bring more variety to our language classes.

   Wordprocessing for example, is used in its original function, to facilitate student writing and editing in the foreign language. It can be social and cooperative with a group of students working on one text and the product (printed) can be more satisfying than the handwritten work. One of the ESL teachers interviewed said he encouraged his students to use wordprocessors and he was pleased with the outcomes. He said the

students were motivated to go over and over their work until they were satisfied. An EFL teacher said he asked his students to produce a newspaper by using wordprocessing facilities (i.e. dictionary, spell checker, delete, cut and paste etc.) and he was also pleased with the outcome.

However, language learning requires other skills as well. The computer's role in the development of oral skills is rather limited.

CALL is sensitive to the needs of the individual learner. It can therefore be used for remedial or tutorial work for students with special problems or needing extra help. It is useful for teachers with large classes who find it difficult to deal with individual needs.

7. There are some implementation problems. The teachers interviewed expressed the problems as follows:

- The students have to be taken to the computer room. It works on a booking system. It is not therefore possible to integrate CALL into the mainstream teaching as part of the class activity. However, it is a good resource for follow-up activities.

- It needs careful planning. The teachers need to be confident and competent enough to decide when and how to switch from one activity to the other.

- It needs careful examination of the CALL programs. The teachers have to spend a considerable time to examine and evaluate the program to see whether it fits into their students' needs. If the students face unfamiliar words and structures or if they work with items that are not challenging according to the level they have reached, they are then discouraged or demotivated.

- It is better if the teachers are involved in programming. They can then author their own programs. However, it needs special training and expertise.

- There is no follow-up assistance after the in-service training offered to the teachers. The teachers need to discuss the pedagogical problems arising during the implementation.

- TESOL teachers, school managers, CALL experts and software publishers all believe that CALL has a place in TESOL and it will be used more often in the future. However, they also believe that a cooperative work of the teachers, experts and publishers will enhance the quality.

In conclusion, I think CALL at present, is in the "**Heart of Darkness**". Many issues (i.e. the economy and the efficiency of teacher training and research on CALL, CALL's effectiveness in language learning, quality of software and the cost of hardware) need to be reconsidered if full integration of CALL into our language classes is desired.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CALL:	Computer Assisted Language Learning
TESOL:	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ESL:	English as a Second Language
NCCALL:	National Centre for Computer Assisted Language Learning
CILT:	Centre of Information for Language Teachers
CTI CML:	Computers in Teaching Initiative Centre for Modern Languages
LEA:	Local Education Authority
IATEFL:	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
RSA:	Royal Society of Arts
CNAA:	Council for National Academic Awards
SIG:	Special Interest Group